

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **AP**NEW YORK TIMES
15 December 1986

U.S. Spy Arrested at Air Base, Nicaragua Says

By **ROBERT D. McFADDEN**

A self-styled counterterrorist said to be the brother of a United States Congressman has been arrested in a restricted area of Nicaragua and detained by the Sandinista Government on suspicion of espionage.

He was the second American arrested in Nicaragua in less than three months.

The Nicaraguan authorities identified the arrested American, as Sam Nesley Hall, 49 years old, of Dayton, Ohio, and said he was seized Friday at Punta Huete Air Force Base, 13 miles northeast of Managua, the capital. He was said to be carrying maps and sketches of military targets hidden in his shoes.

Officials in Managua charged that the presence of the captured man — who has made no secret of his efforts to aid anti-Communist causes and enemies of the Sandinista Government — confirmed their suspicions that the United States planned to attack Nicaragua.

'Points of Military Interest'

"The type of information that was being registered by this man about points of military interest like bridges and airstrips only helps to confirm the seriousness of that information," said Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua.

Officials said that the case of Mr. Hall — said to be the brother of Representative Tony P. Hall, Democrat of Ohio — would be treated like that of Eugene Hasenfus of Marinette, Wis., who was sentenced to 30 years in prison last month after being shot down on a flight carrying weapons for the United States-backed rebels, known as contras.

Angela Saballos, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in Managua, told The Associated Press in a conversation about the captured man, "He said he was working for an organization that was specialized in intelligence and espionage on military objectives, and that he was working for U.S. Government interests."

Foreign Minister d'Escoto said Mr. Hall arrived in Managua on a commercial flight from Honduras on Wednesday and took a taxi to the air base at Punta Huete. The base, on a peninsula jutting into Lake Managua, is used by military aircraft, including Soviet-made MIG fighter planes, according to Reagan Administration officials.

After being seized in a restricted area of the base at 10 A.M. Friday, Mr. Hall first identified himself as a writer and later said he was an adviser to Miskito Indians fighting to oust the Sandinistas, Foreign Minister d'Escoto said.

The Interior Ministry in Managua, whose state security office was directing the investigation, quoted Mr. Hall as having said he worked for a private intelligence-gathering organization called the Phoenix Battalion. It said his passport carried entry visas for Israel, South Africa, El Salvador and other countries.

United States Embassy officials in Managua said yesterday that they had asked to see the captured American, but they said the request was not immediately granted. "We have no independent information on him," said Al Laun, a public affairs officer at the embassy.

In Washington, State Department officials said they had no confirmation of Mr. Hall's arrest. A State Department spokesman, Bruce Ammerman, said, "We hope that the Government of Nicaragua will allow us access to the person arrested."

Representative Hall, a five-term liberal who has voted against all aid to the rebels seeking the overthrow of the Sandinistas, said through a spokesman that the captured man was apparently his brother and that he was "surprised and concerned" over the reports.

"I hope to discuss this soon with State Department officials before taking any action," the Congressman said in a statement. "I do not share the same views on U.S. policy in Central America as my brother, but I love him and pray for his safety."

'Mindful of His Role'

While Representative Hall wants to do all he can to help his brother, an aide, Michael Gessel, said, "He is also mindful of his role as an official of the United States Government and does

not want to use his office in any way to jeopardize United States interests."

Representative Hall, a member of the House Rules Committee who was first elected in 1978, went to El Salvador and Nicaragua in May 1984 with a private organization that was distributing food and supplies to war refugees in the area.

Staff aides said he had voted against all aid to the contras, including the nonlethal aid that was approved last year and the military aid that was approved this year.

Representative Hall rarely talks to his brother, according to Mr. Gessel, and had thought he was still working in a Tampa, Fla., furniture store.

"They are not in close contact," Mr. Gessel said.

In Dayton, Mr. Hall's elderly mother, Anna R. Hall, said that she had been told by a friend that her son was in Nicaragua and that he had planned to return on Tuesday. Until about two months ago, she said, he had been working for a Tampa-area branch of a Dayton furniture store.

Sam Hall, a former Olympic medalist and Ohio state legislator who is a divorced father of three, has spoken in a number of interviews of his activities as a self-employed military adviser. Describing himself as a counterterrorist, he has spoken of his beliefs as a born-again Christian and a strong supporter of President Reagan's policies.

The son of the late Mayor Dave Hall of Dayton, Sam Hall served as a Democrat in the Ohio House of Representatives in 1964 and 1965. He said he quit politics because "I thought it was too phony."

He attended military school as a child and was in the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps. He attended Ohio State University, where he won several diving titles and a silver medal for springboard diving in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. A track injury forced him out of the Air Force in 1961, he said.

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